

The Three Fundamental Principles

by Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab

Know, may Allah have mercy on you, that it is compulsory for us to learn four issues:

1. Knowledge: it is knowing Allah, knowing His Messenger, and knowing the religion of Islam through the evidences.
2. Acting according to this knowledge.
3. Calling others to this knowledge.
4. Patience in the face of adversity that results from calling the people to it.

And the evidence for that is the saying of Allah ta'ala:

“By the Time. Verily, Man is in loss. Except those who believe and do righteous good deeds, and exhorts one another to Truth, and exhorts one another to Patience and Constancy.” (103:1-3)

Ash-Shaafi, may Allah have mercy on him, said about these verses: "If no argument besides this verse had been revealed by Allah to his creation, it would have been sufficient for them."

Al-Bukhari, may Allah have mercy on him, named a chapter in his Sahih:

"Chapter: Knowledge before Saying and Acting"

The evidence is the saying of Allah azza wa jall:

“Know, that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, and ask forgiveness for your sin...” (47:19)

He, azza wa jall, began with knowledge first before saying and acting.

Know, may Allah have mercy on you, that it is obligatory upon every Muslim, male and female, to learn these three aspects and to act according to them:

That Allah has created us, has given us sustenance, and has not left us without guidance. He has sent His messenger to us; whosoever obeys Him is destined to enter Paradise, and whosoever disobeys Him is consigned to Hell.

The evidence is in His saying:

“Verily, We have sent to you, (O men) a Messenger, to be a witness over you, as We did send a Messenger to Pharaoh. But Pharaoh disobeyed the Messenger; so We seized him with a severe Punishment.” (73:15-16)

Allah does not accept that any partner is associated with Him in worship, be he an exalted angel or a Prophet that has been sent. The evidence is in His saying:

“And the places of worship are for Allah (alone): So invoke not any one along with Allah.” (72:18)

Whosoever bears obedience to the Prophet and worshipped Allah alone, it is not permissible for him to take as friends those who deny Allah and His messenger, even if they were his closest kin.

The evidence is in His saying:

“You will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, making friendship with those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their fathers or their sons, or their brothers, or their kindred. For such He has written Faith in their hearts, and strengthened them with Ruh from Himself. And He will admit them to Gardens beneath which Rivers flow, to dwell therein (for ever). Allah will be well pleased with them, and they with Him. They are the Party of Allah. Truly it is the Party of Allah that will be Successful.” (58:22)

Know you, may Allah guide you to His obedience, that the Hanifiyyah is the creed of Ibrahim, which is to worship Allah alone, with pure religious devotion. It is this that Allah has ordered all people with; and indeed He created them for this purpose. The evidence is in His saying:

“And I (Allah) created not the Jinn and mankind, except that they should worship Me (alone).” (51:56)

To "Worship Me" is "to believe in the oneness of Me" (Allah) alone without partners. The greatest of that which Allah has ordered is Tawheed, that is to worship Allah alone. The greatest of that which He has forbidden is Shirk (polytheism), which means associating partners with Allah. The evidence is in His saying:

“Worship Allah, and do not associate any partners with Him (in worship)...” (4:36)

The Three Fundamentals

If you were asked "What are the three fundamentals that a person must know?"

Say: "A bondman should know his Lord, his religion, and his Prophet, (saw)."

The First Fundamental: Knowing Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala.

The Second Fundamental: Knowing the religion of Islam with evidences.

The Third Fundamental: Knowing Your Prophet Muhammed, (saw).

The First Fundamental:

Knowing Allah

If you are asked: "Who is your Lord?"

Say: "My Lord is Allah. He has nourished me and all other creatures with his blessings. He is my Deity, and I have no other Deity but Him and the evidence is in His saying: 'Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the world;' and everything other than Allah is of His Creation; and I am part of that Creation."

If you were asked: "How did you come to know your Lord?"

Say: "Through His signs and His creations. Among his signs are the Night and Day, and Sun and Moon. Among his creations are the Heavens and the Earth, and all that is in and between them."

The evidence is in His saying:

"And from among His Signs are the Night and the Day, and the Sun and the Moon. Prostrate yourselves not to the Sun and the Moon, but prostrate yourselves to Allah, Who created them, if you (really) worship Him." (41:37)

And His saying:

"Indeed your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then He rose over the Throne (in a manner that suits His Majesty). He brings the night as a cover over the day, each seeking the other in rapid succession: and the Sun, the Moon, and the stars, (all) are subjected to His Command. Verily, His is the Creation and the Commandment. Blessed be Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds!" (7:54)

The "Lord" here is the one who deserves to be worshipped, the true Deity. The evidence to this is in His, Allah ta'ala's saying:

"O mankind! Worship your Lord (Allah), who created you and those who were before you, so that you may become pious; Who has made the earth a resting place for you, and the sky as a canopy, and sent down rain from the sky and brought forth therewith fruits as a provision for you. Then do not set up rivals unto Allah (in worship) while you know (that He alone has the right to be worshipped)." (2:21-22)

Ibn Katheer, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "It is only the creator of all these things who deserves to be worshipped."

Some of the forms of worship ordained by Allah are submission, faith, charity, invocation and supplications, fear, hope, trust, aspiration, awe, reverence, apprehension, repentance, appeal for refuge, call for help, sacrifice, to vow.

These as well as other forms ordered by Allah are all to Allah. The evidence is in His saying:

“And the places of worship are for Allah (alone): So invoke not any one along with Allah.” (72:18)

Consequently, if anyone performs one of these rites not exclusively to Allah then he is a polytheist and an unbeliever. The evidence to this is Allah subhana wa ta’ala’s saying:

“And whoever invokes (or worships), besides Allah, any other god, of whom he has no proof, then his reckoning is only with his Lord! And verily the disbelievers will not be successful.” (23:117)

Invocation:

It was narrated in the hadith: "Invocation is the essence of worship", and the evidence is in His saying:

“And your Lord said: “Invoke Me; I will respond to you. Verily those who scorn My worship they will surely enter hell in humiliation!” (40:60)

Fear:

Evidence for fearing Allah alone is in His saying:

“It is only shaitaan who would make men fear his supporters; so fear them not, but fear Me, if you are (true) believers.” (3:175)

Hope:

Evidence of hope is in Allah subhana wa ta’ala’s saying:

“Whoever hopes for the meeting of His Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none in the worship of His Lord.” (18:110)

Trust:

Evidence of trust is the statement of Allah, the exalted:

“...put your trust in Allah if you are believers indeed.” (5:23)

and His saying:

“And whoever puts his trust in Allah, then He (Allah) will suffice him.” (65:3)

Aspiration, Awe, and Humility:

Evidence of aspiration, awe, and humility is in the statement of Allah:

“They used to call on Us with aspiration and awe, and used to humble themselves before Us.” (21:90)

Apprehension:

Evidence of apprehension is in His saying:

“So fear them not, but fear Me; and that I may complete My Blessings on you and that you may be guided.” (2:150)

Repentance:

Evidence of repentance is in the statement of Allah:

“Turn in repentance and in obedience with true Faith to your Lord.” (39:54)

Supplication:

Evidence of supplication is in His saying:

“And You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help.” (1:5)

Also, it is related in the Prophetic tradition:

If you ask for help, ask Allah only.

Appeal for Refuge:

Evidence of appeal for refuge is in Allah ta’ala’s saying:

“Say: I seek refuge with (Allah) the Lord and Cherisher of Mankind, The King of Mankind, the Deity of mankind.” (114:1-3)

Appeal for Help:

Evidence of appeal for help is in His saying:

“Remember when you sought help of your Lord and He answered you (saying): 'I will assist you with a thousand of the angels each behind the other (following one another) in succession.’” (8:9)

Sacrifice:

Evidence of sacrifice is in His saying:

“Say: 'Truly, my prayer, my sacrifice, my living and my dying, are (all) for Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds. He has no partner and of this I have been commanded and I am the first of the Muslims.’” (6:162)

And from the hadith:

Allah's curse is upon those who offer sacrifices to other than Him.

Vows:

Evidence of vows is in His saying:

“They fulfill (their) vows, and they fear a Day whose evil will be wide spreading.” (76:7)

The Second Fundamental:

Knowing the religion of Islam with evidences

It is submission and surrender to Allah alone, with Tawheed and submitting to Him by obeying His commandments and being free from shirk and the (Mushriks) polytheists.

It has three categories:

Islam (Submission).

Imaan (Belief).

Ihsan (Perfection of Worship).

The first: Islam (submission).

Islam has five pillars:

Testifying that there is none worthy of worship but Allah, and that Muhammad is His Messenger.

Performing prayers.

Paying the Zakat.

Fasting in the month of Ramadan.

Pilgrimage to the Sacred House (Mecca).

The evidence for testifying is His saying:

“Allah bears witness that none has the right to be worshipped but He and the angels, and those having knowledge (also give this witness); (He always) maintains His creation on justice. Laa ilaha illa huwa, the All-Mighty, the All- Wise.” (3:18)

It means that it is only Allah that is worthy of being worshipped, and the negation, "... Laa ilaha ...", refutes entirely everything that is worshipped besides Allah. "...illa Allah" affirms that Allah alone deserves to be worshipped without any partners. Just as He has no partner in worship He also has no partner in His Domain. The following verses illustrate this point:

“And (remember) when Ibrahim said to his father and his people: “Verily, I am innocent of what you worship, “Except Him Who did create me, and verily, He will guide me.” And he made it (Laa ilaha illa Allah) a Word lasting among his offspring, that they may turn back (to Allah).” (43:26-28)

And His saying:

“Say: (O Muhammad): O People of the scripture: Come to a word that is just between us and you: That we worship none but Allah (alone); that we associate no partners with him and that none of us shall take others as Lords besides Allah. Then, if they turn away, say: "Bear witness that we are Muslims.” (3:64)

The evidence for testifying that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah is in His saying:

“Verily there has come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves: it grieves him that you should receive any injury or difficulty. He is anxious over you; for the Believers (he is) full of pity kind and merciful. But if they turn away, Say (O Muhammad): “Allah is sufficient for me. Laa ilaha illa Huwa in Him I put my trust and He is the Lord of the Mighty Throne.” (9:128-129)

To testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah signifies that one should obey his orders and believe him in what he has informed us of, to avoid what he prohibits and worship Allah according to His precepts.

The evidence for prayers and Zakat, and the meaning of worshipping Allah alone is in His saying:

“And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allah, and worship none but Him alone, sincerely (abstaining from ascribing partners to Him, being true in faith); and establish regular prayer; and give Zakat; and that is the right religion.” (98:5)

The evidence for fasting is Allah ta’ala’s saying:

“O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may learn to be God-fearing.” (2:183)

The evidence for Pilgrimage is His saying:

“And Pilgrimage to the House is a duty that mankind owes to Allah, those who can afford the journey; but if any deny faith, Allah stands not in need of any of His creations.” (3:97)

The second: Imaan (Belief)

Imaan comprises of seventy and some odd branches (narrated by Bukhari), the highest is to testify to "La ilaha illa Allah" and the lowest is to remove obstacles from the path of the people. Modesty and bashfulness is one of the branches of Imaan.

The pillars of Imaan are six: Belief in:

- Allah.
- His Angels.
- His Books.
- His Messengers.
- The Last Day.
- Divine Preordainment whether good or bad.

Evidence from the Quran for these six pillars of Imaan is:

“It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards East or West; but Al-Bir is (the quality) of the one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book, and the Prophets...” (2:177)

Evidence for Divine preordainment from the Quran is:

“Verily, We have created all things with Qadar (Divine preordainments of all things before their creation as written in the Book of Decrees-Al Lauh al –Mahfuz)” (54:49)

The third: Ihsan (Perfection of worship)

Which is to worship Allah as if you see Him; for though you do not see Him, Verily He sees you.

Evidence is in His saying

“For Allah is with those who restrain themselves, and those who are Muhsinun (those who are perfecting their deeds-who perform good deeds totally for Allah’s sake only without showing off or to gain praise or fame and they do them in accordance with the Sunnah).” (16:128)

and in the statement of Allah exalted:

“In whatever deed you do, and whatever portion you recite from the Quran, and whatever deed you (o mankind) do, We are but Witnesses thereof when you are deeply engrossed therein.” (10:61)

Evidence from the hadith is the well known hadith of Jibreel (Gabriel).

On the authority of Umar bin Al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, who said:

"One day while we were sitting with the messenger (saw) of Allah, there came upon us a man with extremely white clothes and extremely black hair. There were no signs of travel on him and none of us knew him. He sat before the Prophet (saw) and supported his knees up against the knees of the Prophet's and put his hands on the Prophet's thighs. He said:

"O Muhammad, tell me about Islam."

"He (saw)said: "Islam is to testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, to establish the prayers, to give Zakat, to fast the month of Ramadhan, and to perform the Pilgrimage to the House, if you have the means to do so."

"He (the stranger) said:"You have spoken truthfully."

We were amazed that he asks the question and then tells him that what he had said was true.

The stranger then said: "Tell me about Imaan."

He the messenger (saw)of Allah said: "It is to believe in Allah, His Angles, His Books, His Messengers, The Last Day, and in the Divine decree, the good and the evil thereof."

He said: "Tell me about Ihsan."

He (saw) answered: "It is that you worship Allah as if you see Him, even though you do not see Him, He sees you."

He said: "Tell me about [the time of] the hour."

He said (saw): "The one being asked does not know more than the one asking."

He said: "Tell me about its signs."

He said (saw): "The slave girl shall give birth to her master, and you will see the barefooted, scantily-clothed, destitute shepherds competing in erecting lofty buildings."

Then he left. I stayed for a long time. Then he [the Prophet (saw)] said: "O Umar, do you know who the questioner was?"

I said: "Allah and His Messenger know best." He said: "That was [the angel] Gabriel who came to teach you your religion."

The Third Fundamental:

Knowing Your Prophet Muhammed, SallAllahu Aleyhi wa Sallam.

He is Muhammad, son of Abdullah. He was born in Mecca. He lived for sixty-three years, forty before his mission and twenty-three years as a prophet and a messenger.

His prophecy started when Allah revealed unto him: **"Read! in the name of your Lord..."**

and his message started when Allah revealed unto him: **"O you enveloped in garments!**

Arise and warn!"

Allah subhana wa ta'ala sent him as a messenger to warn against associating partners with Allah and to invite to the worship of Allah alone.

The evidence is in His saying:

"O you (Muhammad) enveloped in garments! Arise and warn! And magnify your Lord (Allah)! And purify your garments! And keep away from Ar-Rujz (the idols)! And give not a thing in order to have more. And be patient for the sake of your Lord!" (74:1-7)

"Arise and warn"- against associating partners with Allah, and call the people to worship Allah alone, and **"And magnify your Lord"**- through testifying His unity, **"And purify your garments"**- purify your deeds from polytheism, **"Keep away from Rujz"**- keep away from idols and their worshippers, to be from them and to reject them.

During the first ten years of his prophethood, Muhammad (saw) continued to call people to the worship of Allah alone then he was taken on a journey to the heavens whereupon the five daily prayers (salat) were made obligatory. Thus, he performed prayers in Mecca for three years thereafter he was ordered to migrate to Madinah. Migrating from the abode of disbelief to the abode of Islam. Migration is departing from among the polytheists to settle with the community of Islam. This kind of migration is obligatory upon the nation of the Muslims and it remains up till the Last Day.

The evidence is in His saying:

"Verily! As for those whom the angels have taken (in death) while they are wronging themselves (as they stayed among the disbelievers even though emigration was obligatory to them), they (angels) asked them: "In what condition were you?" They reply: "We were weak and oppressed on earth." The angels asked: "Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to migrate therein?" Such men will find their abode in Hell - What an evil destination! - Except the weak ones among men, women and children who were unable to devise a plan, nor are they able to direct their way." (4:97-98)

and His saying:

"O My slaves who believe! Certainly, spacious is My Earth: therefore worship Me (and Me alone)." (29:56)

Al-Baghawi, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "This revelation refers to the Muslims who remained in Mecca and had not migrated to Madinah. Allah calls them: **"Oh My slaves who believe!"**

The evidence for migration from the Sunnah is the hadith:

"Migration will not end until repentance ends, and repentance will not end until the sun rises from the west."

When the Prophet settled in Madinah, the other ordinances of Islam were prescribed; these include the Zakat, fasting, Pilgrimage, the Adhan (call to prayers), Jihad (fighting in the way of Allah), and the injunction to recommend good and denounce evil.

Muhammad (saw) passed away but the message that he came with remains to this day. There was no good except that he guided his nation to it and no evil except that he warned them

against it. The good that he guided them to is Tawheed and everything that Allah loves and is pleased with. The evil that he warned against is associating partners with Allah and against everything that Allah dislikes and prohibits.

Allah has sent him to all people and nations, and He has ordained that all mankind and jinn should follow him in obedience to his message. The evidence is in His saying:

“Say (O Muhammad): 'O mankind! Verily I am sent unto you all, as the Messenger of Allah'” (7:158)

And with him Allah has completed and perfected the religion. The evidence is in the saying of Allah ta'ala:

“This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.” (5:3)

The evidence of the prophet's death is in the saying of Allah ta'ala:

“Verily, you (O Muhammad) will die and verily, they too will die. Then on the day of Resurrection, you will be disputing before your Lord.” (39:30- 31)

All mankind will be resurrected after death. The evidence is in the saying of Allah ta'ala:

“Thereof (the earth) We created you, and into it We shall return you, and from it We shall bring you out once again.” (20:55)

And His saying:

“And Allah has brought you forth from the (dust of) earth. Afterwards He will return you into it (the earth), and bring you forth (again on the Day of Resurrection).” (71:17-18)

After Resurrection, mankind will render account to Allah and then they will be recompensed according to their deeds. The evidence is in His saying:

“And to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth, that He may requite those who do evil with that which they have done and reward those who do good, with what is best.” (53:31)

Whoever denies or rejects the resurrection has disbelieved. The evidence is in His saying:

“The disbelievers claim that they will never be resurrected. Say (O Muhammad): Yes! By my Lord, you will certainly be resurrected, then you will be informed of (and recompensed for) what you did, and that is easy for Allah.” (64:7)

Allah has sent all the messengers as bearers of good news and warnings. The evidence is in His saying:

“Messengers as bearers of good news as well as of warning, in order that mankind should have no plea against Allah after (the coming) of the messengers. And Allah is Ever All-Powerful, All -Wise.” (4:165)

The first messenger is Nuh, alaihi sallam and Muhammad (saw) is the last and he is the Seal of the prophets. The evidence that the first messenger is Nuh alaihi sallam is the statement of Allah, the exalted:

“Verily, We have sent the revelation to you (O Muhammad) as We sent the revelation to Noah and the Prophets after him.” (4:163)

To every nation Allah subhana wa ta’ala sent a messenger, from the time of Nuh to Muhammad, to command them to worship Allah alone, and to forbid them from worshipping taghut (false deities). The evidence is in His saying:

“And verily, We have sent among every nation a Messenger (proclaiming): “Worship Allah (alone), and avoid taghut (all false deities).” (16:36)

Allah subhana wa ta’ala has made it obligatory upon all to disbelieve in taghut and to worship Allah alone.

Ibn Al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "Taghut (false deities) is that with which the slave exceeds his limits, whether as an object of worship, or followed, or obeyed."

The taghuts are numerous, but at the head of them are five:

Iblees, may Allah curse him.

Whoever is worshipped and is pleased with being worshipped.

Whoever calls people to worship him.

Whosoever claims any knowledge of the Unseen (Ghaib).

Whosoever judges or rules by other than what Allah revealed.

The evidence is in His saying:

“There is no compulsion in religion. Verily the Right Path has become distinct from the wrong path. Whoever disbelieves in taghut and believes in Allah then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that will never break. And Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower.” (2:256)

This is the meaning of "La ilaha illa Allah"

In the Prophetic tradition is this text:

"The head of the Command is Islam (La ilaha illa Allah), its Pillars are prayer, and its highest pinnacle is Jihad (fighting in the Cause of Allah)."

Allah knows best.